

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2001
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

The meeting of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) was called to order on November 14, 2001 at 9:45 a.m. at Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Room 1A, Bakersfield, California.

Members Present: Rod Diridon, Chairperson
 Ernest A. Bates
 Jerry Epstein
 John P. Fowler
 Edward Graveline
 William E. Leonard
 T.J. Stapleton

Members Absent: Leland Wong, Vice Chairperson
 Ben L. Hom

Approval of Minutes for September 19, 2001 Meeting

Chairperson Diridon presented the minutes for approval. The minutes were approved 7-0.

Approval of Minutes for October 26, 2001 Meeting

Chairperson Diridon presented the minutes for approval. The minutes were approved 7-0.

Members' Report

Chairperson Diridon stated that the Authority was under-funded this year. He expressed the Authority's appreciation to Assemblyman Florez and Senator Costa for their efforts at the state level and influences at the national level to obtain additional funding.

Public Comment

Bakersfield Mayor Harvey Hall

Chairperson Diridon introduced the Mayor of Bakersfield, Harvey Hall. Mayor Hall expressed his pleasure in California High-Speed Rail Authority holding its meeting in Bakersfield today. Mayor Hall expressed his support of the high-speed rail project.

Supervisor Ken Peterson

Chairperson Diridon introduced Supervisor Ken Peterson, Kern County. Supervisor Peterson welcomed the Authority to Kern County. He expressed his strong support and appreciation for the work of the Authority. Supervisor Peterson also expressed his appreciation for the opportunity for the community of Kern County to share their views pertaining to the potential station sites. Supervisor Peterson shared the following observations:

1. Seek to have the vicinity of F Street studied along with the Golden State and M Street option. The community believes some congestion and siding issues may be better addressed by moving the location closer to the F Street area.
2. Identified Kern County's preliminary preference of the station sites in order of preference:
 - a) Seventh Standard Road/West of State Route 99
 - b) Golden State site, preferably closer to F Street
 - c) Truxton Avenue area site.

Chairperson Diridon directed attention to Christine Sproul, Deputy Attorney General. Deputy Attorney General Sproul summarized the legal requirements for analysis of alternatives in an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR), and for making screening decisions as to the alternatives to be studied in the EIS/EIR. Deputy Attorney General Sproul discussed the process by

which the Authority has followed the legal guidelines and continues to fulfill the legal requirements for analysis of alternatives in an EIR/EIS in order to satisfy requirements of NEPA and CEQA.

Chairperson Diridon introduced David Valenstein, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Chairperson Diridon invited Mr. Valenstein to share his comments. Mr. Valenstein stated the Authority and FRA have been working in close partnership on this process in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement between the FRA and the Authority. Authority staff has consulted FRA on the staff recommendations. Mr. Valenstein concurred in the remarks by Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul summarizing legal requirements.

First Screening Report – Part 1 (Draft)

Executive Director Morshed reported this is the first screening report. Voting on the report is an important decision, because the remaining work will focus on what is recommended for further evaluation. The first screening report has been broken down into two pieces. First Screening Report – Part 1 is a broader report that covers four of the major segments of the alignment. First Screening Report – Part 2 covers the Sacramento – Bakersfield segment and will be discussed during Agenda Item 8. The Authority has been working in partnership with the FRA on this document. Executive Director Morshed noted that the First Screening Report was part of the Authority's first budget plan-the first \$5 million the Authority received for environmental studies. So far the current budget issue has not been an impediment to preparing or processing this report. He drew attention to three revisions to the staff recommendations contained in the First Screening Report:

1. Reinstatement of a LA Union Station-LAX alignment
2. Reinstatement of a San Bernardino Station
3. Minor changes in the Los Angeles-San Diego corridor that will be discussed in agenda item 7.

Executive Director Morshed reported, as was stated at the November Board meeting, up to this time the Authority has been evaluating options that included Maglev technology. However, due to severe constraints in the San Francisco-San Jose segment and elsewhere, staff recommends the elimination of Maglev technology as an alternative for study in the EIR/EIS and recommends that further evaluation of options be limited to steel-wheel-on-steel-rail technology. He called upon Deputy Director Dan Leavitt to present the staff recommendations for alignments, station locations and high-speed train systems for the Bay Area-Merced corridor, with the exception of the San Jose-Merced segment, to the Board for approval. Deputy Director Leavitt noted the Authority has received strong support in the Bay Area for high-speed rail and the current staff recommendations. The following are some who support the staff recommendations specified in the First Screening Report – Part 1: Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Caltrain Joint Powers Board; BART Board of Directors; City of San Jose; City and County of San Francisco; City of Oakland. Deputy Director Carrie Pourvahidi presented the staff recommendations for alignments, station locations and high-speed train systems for Bakersfield-Los Angeles corridor, with the exception of the Bakersfield-Sylmar segment, to the Board for approval. Due to tunneling issues, the Bakersfield-Sylmar segment will be discussed at the January meeting. Chairperson Diridon deferred Deputy Director Pourvahidi's presentation and introduced Councilmember Sue Benham.

Public Comment

Bakersfield Councilmember Sue Benham

Councilmember Benham expressed her community's great concern over sprawl in the downtown area which they feel would be encouraged by the Seventh Standard Road site. A downtown station location fits well with the goals and objectives of downtown Bakersfield.

Deputy Director Carrie Pourvahidi continued her presentation of the staff recommendations for alignments, station locations and high-speed train systems for the Bakersfield-Los Angeles corridor. Deputy Director Dan Leavitt presented staff recommendations for alignments, station locations and high-speed train systems for the Los Angeles-Inland Empire-San Diego and Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego corridors to the Board for approval. The following are some who support the staff recommendations specified in the First Screening Report – Part 1: San Bernardino Association of Governments; Riverside County Transportation Commission; Metrolink; City of Murrietta; Orange

County; County of San Diego; Amtrak; Caltrans; LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency; Orange County Transportation Authority; San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG); North County Transit District (NCTD); Metropolitan Transit Board of Directors; City of Anaheim; City of Fullerton; City of Irvine. Deputy Director Leavitt further reported the Authority has also received letters of concern from:

- City of San Clemente
The City continues to not support any alternative along the current alignment where the beach is located. The City of San Clemente would like the Authority to continue the investigation of the Foothills Toll Road alternative that staff is recommending for elimination.
- City of Tustin
The City of Tustin is against investigation of electrification from Irvine to Union Station but supports non-electric incremental improvements along the LOSSAN corridor.
- Train Riders Association of California
Train Riders Association of California is against the elimination of electrification south of Irvine.

Deputy Director Leavitt reported the following agencies support an electrified, steel-wheel-on steel-rail statewide system: Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Caltrain Joint Powers Board; BART Board of Directors; City of San Jose; City and County of San Francisco; City of Oakland; Amtrak; LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency; San Diego Association of Governments; North County Transit District; Metropolitan Transit Board of Directors; City of Anaheim; City of Fullerton;

Deputy Director Leavitt reported the following agencies support a non-electrified system, south of Irvine: Amtrak; Caltrans; LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency; Orange County Transportation Authority; San Diego Association of Governments; Metrolink; North County Transit District; Metropolitan Transit Board of Directors.

Chairperson Diridon stated the HWY 163 and Qualcom alternatives were originally investigated at the request of the city of San Diego. However, the city currently does not want these alternatives investigated. There are serious environmental and tunneling problems in connection with these alternatives, specifically under Balboa Park. Therefore, Chairperson Diridon inquired if these alternatives can be eliminated at this time. Upon consulting with Deputy Attorney General Sproul and David Valenstein, FRA, it was determined the HWY 163 and Qualcom alternatives be put on the agenda in January. Member Leonard expressed his agreement with the staff recommendation not to conduct further investigation of Maglev technology as an alternative in the EIR/EIS. Member Leonard stated Maglev wouldn't work because due to severe physical constraints it could not feasibly be used to provide access to San Francisco and there is no place in the world that has a history of revenue service using Maglev. Member Epstein added the Authority has never been able to get a guarantee on Maglev and he therefore agrees with Member Leonard's comment.

Public Comment

Julianne Nygaard, SANDAG; LOSSAN; NCTD

Ms. Nygaard expressed her support of high-speed rail. Ms. Nygaard commented on three issues:

- Support of the link with LAX
- Opposes electrification south of Irvine
- Supports the elimination of 163 and Center City.

Ms. Nygaard reported each one of the agencies she represents has letters on file in accord with her comment.

Russell Reagan, Bay Rail Alliance

Mr. Reagan expressed his support for the steel-wheel-on steel-rail technology option. He also underscored the Authority's desire to provide high-speed rail trains to service the San Francisco peninsula and the San Francisco Airport.

Brian Stankiewicz, Bay Rail Alliance

Mr. Stankiewicz expressed his support for the steel-wheel-on steel-rail technology option. He also expressed support of continuing to evaluate the East Bay Capitols route and Capitols to 880. Mr.

Stankiewicz stated he feels high speed rail should share tracks with Caltrain in the north and share tracks with Surfliner and Metrolink in the south. He also feels the Authority should continue investigation of an Emeryville station site.

Jim Hare, City of San Clemente

Mr. Hare stated his concerns regarding the lack of alternatives to the bypass of the beachfront at San Clemente, the potential for continued expansion and the use of the existing rails at the foot of the bluff and the possibility of the use of this study by successor agencies such as Caltrans. He also expressed his appreciation for the interaction and cooperation the City of San Clemente has experienced with Authority staff.

Member Leonard moved to approve the proposed Resolution Determining Alternatives for Study in the Draft Program EIR/EIS for a Proposed California High Speed Train System and Alternatives to be Eliminated from further Study in the Draft Program EIR/EIS. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, the California High Speed Rail Authority has adopted a final Business Plan which describes a proposed high speed train system for California and describes general corridor alignments and general station locations, and has recommended that environmental review proceed for a proposed high speed train system for California;

WHEREAS, the California High Speed Rail Authority (the "Authority") has executed a Memorandum with the Federal Railroad Administration (the "FRA") which provides for the preparation of a Program EIR/EIS for a proposed California High Speed Train System;

WHEREAS, the Memorandum between the Authority and the FRA provides that the Authority will serve as the lead agency for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Federal Railroad Administration will serve as the lead agency for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in preparing the Program EIR/EIS;

WHEREAS, the Authority issued a Notice of Preparation in compliance with CEQA and the FRA issued a Notice of Intent in compliance with NEPA indicating that a Program EIR/EIS is being prepared for a proposed California High Speed Train System and requesting comment from the public and public agencies;

WHEREAS, the Authority with the participation of the FRA has conducted a series of scoping meetings to receive comments from public agencies and the public, and has consulted with numerous public agencies, to help identify issues of concern, potential environmental impacts, and potential alternatives for study in the draft Program EIR/EIS for the proposed California High Speed Train System;

WHEREAS, the Authority has caused screening evaluation studies to be prepared which summarize information concerning potential alternatives for study in the draft Program EIR/EIS in comparison to the screening evaluation criteria and the performance criteria previously set forth by the Authority for a proposed California High Speed Train System;

WHEREAS, the Authority has reviewed the screening evaluation studies, the staff recommendations developed in consideration of the screening evaluation studies, public and public agency comment in response to the NOP and NOI, and public and public agency comment on the Draft First Screening Report, Part 1, of November 6, 2001, and finds that they provide an appropriate basis for making initial screening decisions and determining appropriate alternatives to be studied in the draft Program EIR/EIS;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE California High Speed Rail Authority hereby takes the following actions:

- (1) approves the recommended general corridors and station locations as alternatives to be studied in the draft Program EIR/EIS for the proposed California High Speed Train System, as presented in the First Screening Report, Part 1, November 6, 2001, as revised and presented at the November 14, 2001, public meeting of the Authority; and*
- (2) concurs in the recommended elimination of certain alternatives from further consideration for reasons of (a) inability to meet most of the basic project objectives or to meet the need for and purposes of the project; (b) infeasibility due to economic, technical or engineering, or environmental concerns; (c) inability to avoid significant environmental impacts; or (d) a combination of these factors, as reflected in the First Screening Report, including Appendix A, as revised and presented at the November 14, 2001, public meeting of the Authority;*
- (3) directs staff to proceed with the environmental review work for the proposed California High Speed Train System in accordance with the above screening decisions; and*
- (4) directs staff to forward to the FRA for its consideration and concurrence the Authority's initial screening decisions as presented in this Resolution.*

** Not addressed in this resolution are the following: (a) recommendations for a segment connecting the Los Angeles Union Station/Southeast Los Angeles County to Los Angeles International Airport; (b) recommendations concerning the San Jose to Merced segment; (c) recommendations concerning the Bakersfield to Sylmar segment; and (d) the recommendations in the First Screening Report, Part 2, November 9, 2001, concerning the Sacramento to Bakersfield segment.*

Member Graveline seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. A copy of said resolution and the First Screening Report – Part 1 (Draft) including Appendix A- Confirmation of Previous Decisions are available on the Authority's website, www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov.

Revision to First Screening Report – Part 1 (Draft)

Executive Director Morshed stated that initially staff recommended this entire segment be eliminated from further investigation. However staff is currently recommending the alignment be preserved for further investigation. He called upon Deputy Director Dan Leavitt to present the staff recommendations for alignments for further investigation in the LA Union Station/Southeast LA County to LAX segment of the Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego corridor. A copy of the Revision to the First Screening Report – Part 1 (Draft) is on the Authority's website, www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov.

Public Comment

Senator Jim Costa

Senator Costa thanked the Authority for holding a meeting in Bakersfield today. Senator Costa stated he feels high-speed rail can be the catalyst that will move us forward. Senator Costa stated it is clearly critical for the Authority to work together with leaders to make sure high-speed rail happens sooner rather than later. Senator Costa expressed the urgent need of developing a strategy that will convince the legislature and the Governor. In light of September 11, it has become clearer we need a multi-modal transportation system that provides less reliance on one means than another and that will therefore make the public feel more secure. Senator Costa stated the Authority must design a viable system that will serve the most populated centers. Senator Costa pledged to continue to work with the Authority members as he has in the past. He reported he has been working with Senator Feinstein to provide additional federal funding and will continue to try to convince the Legislature and the Governor that despite current fiscal constraints, the high-speed rail program is still an important effort to keep going. Senator Costa stated he would seek to establish a Senate Transportation Committee Subcommittee with its focus as high-speed rail by January. Senator Costa commended the Authority on eliminating further investigation of Maglev in the EIR/EIS.

First Screening Report – Part 2 (Draft)

Executive Director Morshed called upon Deputy Director Carrie Pourvahidi to present recommendations for alignments, station locations and high-speed train systems for further investigation in the Sacramento-Bakersfield corridor to the Board as an information item. This item will be voted on at the January 16, 2002 Board meeting. A copy of the First Screening Report – Part 2 (Draft) is available on the Authority's website, www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov.

Public Comment

Paul Bartlett, LA-Fresno-Bay Area-Sacramento High Speed Rail Corridor Study Group

Mr. Bartlett delivered a presentation to the Board. Mr. Bartlett requested that the Authority reconsider the elimination of the investigation of the Panoche Pass alignment between the Central Valley and San Jose. According to Mr. Bartlett, the Panoche Pass has been "traditionally" supported by Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kings counties. Mr. Bartlett noted that the Authority's predecessor (the HSR Commission) had concluded that the Panoche Pass traverses milder terrain than the other passes, and requires less cut-and-fill, and less tunneling. In addition, the HSR Commission's work showed no statistical difference in revenue between the Panoche and Pacheco passes. The Panoche Pass would provide for faster travel times between the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Modesto travelers will not take high-speed trains via the Pacheco Pass to the Bay Area; instead they would use the existing rail service (Altamont Commuter Service) that is being improved. Mr. Bartlett also voiced his support of the BNSF rail alignment between Fresno and Bakersfield. He noted that the UP rail alignment goes through more communities in the Central Valley and therefore will result in slower travel times and higher capital costs. Finally, Mr. Bartlett suggested that high-speed trains should run non-stop between Palmdale and Fresno; non-electric trains would serve other markets.

Graham Kay-Eddie, Makabusi, Inc.

Mr. Kay-Eddie shared his design solution for the City of Bakersfield and its metropolitan area. Mr. Kay-Eddie's solution locates two potential rail alignments. The first path allows for a high-speed non-stop line along the Union Pacific corridor, allowing convergence northward toward either of the Burlington Northern or Southern Pacific corridors to the Bay Area. The second path suggests a local service line, running along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe alignment westwards and then northwards to serve Bakersfield passengers. Mr. Kay-Eddie requested the Authority seriously consider these potential alignments based on the desire to boost the oil/agricultural economic base in Bakersfield.

John W. Stinson, Bakersfield Assistant City Manager

Mr. Stinson spoke on behalf of Jack LaRoche. Mr. Stinson stated the City of Bakersfield desires a downtown station site. The Seventh Standard Road is less desirable because some of the nearby land is zoned for residential development, does not provide adequate linkage to Metropolitan Bakersfield, and does not provide multi-modal capabilities that a downtown site would provide. The City of Bakersfield is supportive of and promotes a downtown station site because it is a major population center, the zoning is consistent, provides appropriate linkage, currently has existing multi-modal systems, and downtown is also a more demanded destination.

Authority Members' Meetings for Compensation

Chairperson Diridon presented the list of meetings for compensation. Member Epstein moved to approve the list. Member Bates seconded the motion, which carried 7-0.

Visalia Mayor Don Landers

Mayor Landers expressed his support of the Union Pacific alignment option with a related stop near the Visalia Municipal Airport. He stated the high-speed rail project is very important to intrastate travel and especially critical to travel to and from the Central Valley, Los Angeles and the Bay Area. Mayor Landers stated the need for a safe and reliable surface intrastate transportation system became ever so evident with the events on the East Coast that shut down air transportation for several days. Mayor Landers feels the Union Pacific (UP) alignment is the best alternative to providing high-speed rail service to the Central Valley. Providing a Visalia Municipal Airport station location provides for multi-modal transportation opportunities and following the existing UP rail alignment should minimize impacts

to existing land use and parcel lines. Mayor Landers stated Visalia currently has a population of approximately 100,000 and in 2020 expects a population of 165,000.

Dave Cross

Mr. Cross expressed support for a Bakersfield Station at Amtrak inter-modal location. Mr. Cross also submitted a report “Metropolitan Bakersfield High-Speed Rail Terminal Analysis and Evaluation” on behalf of Mr. Mike Miller, Kern Manufacturing Association.

Bob Madewell, City of Fresno

Mr. Madewell presented a letter in behalf of Fresno Mayor Alan Autry supporting a downtown Fresno station location and Union Pacific station location within the city.

Ron Brummett, Executive Director, Kern Council of Governments (COG)

Mr. Brummett expressed his support of the high-speed rail project. He stated Kern COG supports the three station locations the Authority is looking at in Kern County. Expressed his pleasure for the Authority’s support of steel-wheel-on steel-rail. Mr. Brummett stated Kern COG does not support the Union Avenue alignment option. Mr. Brummett reported Kern County is supposed to grow from 3.2 million currently to 6.5 million in the next 20 years.

Clark Thompson, Fresno Council of Governments (COG)

Mr. Thompson expressed his appreciation to Deputy Director Pourvahidi and the Authority staff for listening to the positions adopted by the Fresno COG. The staff recommendations reflect Fresno COG’s positions. He expressed his support of the elimination of Maglev and reported Fresno COG takes the following positions:

- Potential impacts on farm land need to be minimized
- Supports the lowest-grades possible, thereby allowing freight capability
- Supports a downtown Fresno station location
- Use of existing railroad right of way is preferred
- Opposes alternative alignments east and west of highway 99

Arthur Unger, Sierra Club, California

Mr. Unger expressed his concerns of energy, air pollution, transit time, preservation of agricultural land, and the overall preservation of endangered species habitat. Mr. Unger further expressed he felt the Bakersfield station should have a connection with mass transit as well as a connection to Amtrak.

Herman Ruddell, Downtown Bakersfield Business Association (DBA)

Mr. Ruddell stated the Golden State Site is most preferred by the (DBA). He expressed his support of a downtown Bakersfield station location with an airport connection.

John F. Ferdinandi, Jr., Fresno Area Residents for Rail Consolidation (FARRC)

Mr. Ferdinandi stated he supports Fresno COG’s comments stated earlier. Mr. Ferdinandi recommended a meeting with Authority staff before the January board meeting.

Chester Moland, Kern Transportation Foundation

Mr. Moland expressed his support of the three recommended station sites. He stated a station within the urban core is vital to the development of downtown.

Walter Strakosch

Mr. Strakosch expressed his support of using existing right-of-ways, preferring SP/UP where possible. He stated the City of Merced and the City of Modesto would like grade separation and are willing to contribute to the cost. Mr. Strakosch inquired if there has been any question to the railroads regarding the use of existing right-of-ways. Chairperson Diridon informed Mr. Strakosch the railroads have been consulted on a technical basis, but noted that it would be premature to negotiate on corridors that have not been chosen.

Larry Miller, San Joaquin Valley Interests

Mr. Miller expressed the following concerns

1. Consultants for the San Joaquin Valley to Southern California corridor and the San Joaquin Valley to Bay Area corridor have not spent any time in the San Joaquin Valley soliciting input or hearing concerns.
2. Planning for high-speed rail service in the San Joaquin Valley has effectively ignored the issue of optimal integration with existing and (planned) conventional rail service.
3. If the Authority, working with Caltrans and Amtrak were to propose integrating their services and optimizing their funding and infrastructure developments jointly, the public would be highly disposed to look on any funding or bonding in a very favorable way.

Supervisor Connie Conway, County of Tulare Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Conway stated the County of Tulare supports staff recommendations.

Werner Lipton

Mr. Lipton responded to Mr. Paul Bartlett's earlier comments supporting high-speed rail trains running non-stop from Bakersfield to Palmdale by stating the small towns should not have to put up with the disturbance of the construction of high-speed rail without the benefit of station locations.

Chairperson Diridon commented in response to Mr. Paul Bartlett's earlier comment regarding the Panoche Pass by stating the Panoche Pass alignment would cost the most and have the least ridership. The Panoche Pass alignment option was examined carefully and rejected because of the length, cost, and travel time.

Member Bates inquired of the Proposition 116 funds. Executive Director Morshed reported the Authority received the Proposition 116 funds and as a result, staff has instructed the consultants to start work on the tunneling issue.

Identification of Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next California High-Speed Rail Authority Board meeting will be January 16, 2002 in Sacramento, California.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.